

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) ~~A tool~~ An apparatus for distinguishing ~~between strengths of~~ bindings of ~~different strengths between first~~ target and ~~second~~ capture microbiological entities, the ~~tool~~ apparatus comprising:

[[-]] ~~first particles and second particles, at least one of which is magnetic, the first~~ particles being connected only to the first target microbiological entities; and

[[-]] means for acting on the first and second particles to cause the first and second particles to exert a mechanical stress on the bindings between the first and second target and capture microbiological entities, a force generating the mechanical stress sufficient to break the bindings between the first target and capture microbiological entities is used to distinguish between different strengths of the bindings of different strengths,

wherein the force used by the means for acting to generate stress on the first and second particles comprising is provided at least by a magnetic field generator.

19. (Currently amended) ~~A tool~~ The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein both first and second particles are magnetic; and ~~wherein a magnitude of a magnetic moment of each of~~ the first particles is greater than a magnitude of a magnetic moment of each of the second particles.

20. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~ apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first target microbiological entities, and the second particles are coupled to the second microbiological entities.

21. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus according to claim 18, wherein each of the first target and capture microbiological ~~entity is a~~entities are bioactive ~~molecule~~molecules.

22. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the means for acting on the first and second particles includes means for exerting a fluid frictional force on the first or second particles.

23. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus according to claim 18, further comprising an array of the first target microbiological entities arranged on capture spots on a substrate.

24. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus according to claim 23, further comprising means for generating an excitation that forces a lateral movement of the first and second particles with respect to the array.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 18, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first target microbiological entities, and the second particles are not coupled to any microbiological entities.

27. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 18, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first target microbiological entities, and the second particles are coupled to ~~third~~second target microbiological entities, ~~wherein the second~~capture microbiological entities include capture molecules, ~~wherein the first~~ microbiological entities include first target molecules, ~~wherein the third~~second target microbiological entities include second target molecules, and wherein the first and second target molecules may bind to different parts of the capture molecules.

28. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 19, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first target microbiological entities, and the second particles are not coupled to any microbiological entities.

29. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 19, wherein the first particles are coupled to the first target microbiological entities, and the second particles are coupled to the ~~second~~capture microbiological entities.

30. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 29, wherein the first target microbiological entities include target molecules, and the ~~second~~capture microbiological entities include capture molecules.

31. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 20, wherein the magnetic field generator applies to the first and second particles a magnetic field whose magnetic vector has a varying direction as a function of time.

32. (Currently amended) The ~~tool~~apparatus of claim 20, wherein the first target microbiological entities include target molecules, and the ~~second~~capture microbiological entities include capture molecules.

33-38. (Canceled)